

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 EB-08 /103 W
-----011129 089627 /10

P R 010948Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9576

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION UUUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 2325

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, IS, NI

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA ADOPTS NEW MIDDLE EAST POLICY

REF: LAGOS 2059

1. DIRECTOR MEA AMERICAS DEPARTMENT EDREMODA (WHO UNFOR-
TUNATELY FROM OUR STATNDPOINT IS RETIRING FROM FOREIGN SERVICE)
VOLUNTEERED TO POLCOUNS AND VISITING AF/W OFFICERS HOUDEK AND

LOLLIS TODAY THAT NIGERIA HAD MADE "SHIFT" IN ITS MIDDLE EASTERN POLICY. REFERRING TO EXTAFFS COMMISSIONER GARBA'S SPEECH AT UNIVERSITY IBADAN FEBRUARY 19 (REFTEL), EDREMODA SAID ARABS HAD BEEN "INDIFFERENT" OR AT LEAST HAD "DEMONSTRATED LITTLE INTEREST IN" THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. MANY NIGERIAN OFFICIALS HAVE COME TO REALIZE THAT AFRICAN SUPPORT FOR THE ARAB CAUSE IN MIDDLE EAST HAD NOT BEEN RECIPROCATED. ADDITIONALLY, NIGERIA HAD SUFFERED LOSS OF WELCOME ISRAELI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND THE SCANDANAVIAN COUNTRIES WHICH HAD LONG BEEN STRONG SUPPORTERS OF AFRICAN CAUSE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, HAD BEEN CRITICAL OF AFRICAN ACTION IN BREAKING WITH ISRAEL.

2. EDREMODA SAID THIS "RETHINKING" OF AFRICAN POLICY TOWARD MIDDLE EAST IS NOT CONFINED TO NIGERIA. RATHER, HE ASSERTED THAT THE SAME PROCESS IS TAKING PLACE ALL OVER AFRICA. HE CAUTIONED THAT THIS REORIENTATION OF AFRICAN ATTITUDES WOULD NOT RESULT IN AN IMMEDIATE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH ISRAEL, BUT INDICATED THAT SUCH WOULD BE THE EVENTUAL OUTCOME. NEITHER NIGERIA NOR OTHER AFRICAN STATES WOULD ACT ALONE; A GROUP OF GOVERNMENTS WOULD TAKE JOINT ACTION. AS FOR OFFICIAL NIGERIAN POSITION, FMG WOULD CONTINUE TO FAVOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL TO PRE-1967 BORDERS BUT RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE AREAS, E.G. JERUSALEM, FROM WHICH ISRAELIS WON'T BE BUDGED. IN UN NIGERIA WILL SUPPORT SETTLEMENT BASED ON COMPLIANCE WITH UNSC RESOLUTION 242.

3. COMMENT: GARBA WILL BE ATTENDING AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT IN CAIRO AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO REITERATE NIGERIAN UNHAPPINESS WITH LACK OF ARAB SUPPORT FOR AFRICAN CAUSE IN CONFIDENTIAL

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SOUTHERN AFRICA. IF NIGERIANS INTENDED TO CAUSE CONSTERNATION AMONG ARABS THEY HAVE APPARENTLY SUCCEEDED. EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR, WHO FIRST HELD VIEW THAT GARBA HAD DELIVERED AND UNCLEARED SPEECH, IN LATER CONVERSATION EVIDENCED REAL CONCERN THAT THERE HAD BEEN A POLICY SHIFT. TODAY'S MEETING WITH EDREMODA SEEMS TO CONFIRM THAT NIGERIANS HAVE INDEED TAKEN A SECOND LOOK. WHETHER OR NOT ARABS CAN PLACATE FMG AND OTHER ARICANS IN CAIRO UNCERTAIN, BUT WE WOULD EXPECT NIGERIANS IN FUTURE TO BE CONSIDERABLY MORE EVEN-HANDED IN THEIR APPROACH TO MIDDLE EASTERN SITUATION THAN THEY HAVE BEEN SINCE THE BREAK WITH TEL AVIV IN 1973.
CROSBY

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